

The Builder.

No. CXXV.

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 1846.



THE present views of society, with regard to crime, are fortunately different from what they were fifty years ago, although much ignorance and misconception of the subject still remain. A man may commit an offence against the laws, and yet be afterwards a good and useful member of the community: he has yielded once, but may never yield again. It is not contrary to reason to believe, that some amongst the best and most conscientious of men have, at one or other period in their lives, committed an act, afterwards bitterly repented of and stoned for, which, publicly known, would have branded them as criminals in the eyes of the world, and led to their utter ruin under our defective institutions. The fence which separates innocence and guilt is in many cases so slight, and so easily passed, that, but for the sake of example, we should rather pity, than punish, those who unhappily swerve from the right side. Let us ourselves seek earnestly for strength to keep it.

At one time criminals were regarded as all alike, and treated all alike. Moreover, and here was the great mischief, the whole course of proceeding tended to make this assumption correct; and if they did not speedily become all alike,—all as bad as the worst amongst them,—it was not the fault of the system. Something has been done to lessen this dreadful evil, but not enough. How anxiously should our law-givers strive still further to effect improvement.

As regards young offenders, the necessity of some change cannot be too loudly or too often urged: the effects of the present system cannot be contemplated without a shudder by those who feel the value of a soul. Look at the result of the same indiscretion committed by two boys in different walks of life. The son of respectable parents, wanting nothing, and duly instructed as to right and wrong, allowing his stomach to overcome his head and heart, has perished some sixpences, and is detected;—the case often occurs. A sound whipping, bread and water for a day, and judicious reasoning, suffice to cure while they punish, and make the first offence the last. How different a result awaits the pauper boy who, under stronger temptation, and with less power within to resist it, abstracts a roll from a baker's shop, or wherewithal to buy one, is caught and sent to prison. His fate is sealed. Even if his morals be not entirely corrupted, as is too often the case, a mark is set on him, he is a *thief*, and his life is a course of crime.

We are quite aware that the remedy is difficult; but it is so urgent, that no efforts should be spared to obtain it.*

We have been led to make these observations, by the name which has been given to the structure selected for illustration in the present number, *THE MIDDLESEX HOUSE OF DETENTION*. The building previously here (erected in 1816), was called the New Clerkenwell Prison. The new building is intended exclusively as a place

to retain the accused only, and the name has been changed with the hope of, in some degree, preventing the stigma, of having been sent to prison, from attaching to those who may be eventually acquitted. There is something in a name, and we think this a step in the right direction; steps are taken, too, to prevent the contamination of its inmates by evil association.

The accompanying plan and section (p. 282), with the annexed references, will show the general form and arrangement of the new structure. The transverse corridor at the foot of the cross is set apart for females, and is separated from the part appropriated to males, by the chapel (shewn in section), and other portions of the building that will be common to either sex. The three arms of the cross which are for males, have at the intersection a hall of octagon form, 53 feet in height.

The length of the male corridors, from east to west, including the central hall, is 224 feet; the width 13 feet, and the height 38 feet. The northern wing is 105 feet in length; and the wing for females measures, from east to west, 153 feet. The rooms or cells for the prisoners, of which there are 286, are 11 feet by 7 feet, and 8 feet high to springing of arch. The apartments for reception, and cells for punishment, are on the basement, and of similar dimensions; there are also others on the ground-floor, and on the basement story are eight bath rooms, two fumigating rooms, two examining rooms, two clothes stores, six punishment cells, a wash-house and laundry, steward's store-room and office, kitchen, scullery, coal and potatoe stores, and four heating apparatus rooms. On the ground-floor, the necessary clerks' offices, reception rooms and solicitors' rooms, governor's and surgeon's, and schoolmaster's rooms; on the one pair, a large committee room, chapel, and chaplain's room; and these, with the infirmaries, turnkeys' rooms, and four large unappropriated rooms in the female wings, complete the arrangement of the main building. The new governor's and matrons' houses, and entrance lodge, as well as the new eastern boundary wall, shewn on the plan, are included in the present contract with the builder.

The apartments for the prisoners are provided, under the contract, with all the fittings and conveniences contained in those at the model prison at Pentonville (a pan-closet and copper washing-basin); and the contract for the whole of the works, by Messrs. Grimdell, is 28,684*l.*; all the old bricks and other sound materials being used.

The whole stands on an artificial foundation of concrete, varying from 3 feet 6 inches to 7 feet in thickness. The central portion of the entrance front will be faced with blue lias cement, the remainder of the exterior will be of brickwork. The sashes are to be iron, fixed; the floors formed of asphalt on brick arches, the spandrells being first filled in with concrete.

Considerable pains appear to have been taken with respect to warming and ventilating the building. Mr. Hayden, of Trowbridge, was called in to arrange this, in conjunction with the architect, Mr. Moseley, and Messrs. Cotnam and Hallen are carrying out their intentions under contract, for 600*l.*

Fresh air, entering through the colvert near the room C, shewn in section, and warmed in winter by an apparatus, is to be admitted to every cell by means of flues in the spandrells of the arches forming the floor of corridors, and a separate shaft (of 60 inches horizontal area), constructed in the thickness

of the wall, and opening near the ground. Pipes of hot water also pass through the spandrells to assist in raising, when necessary, the temperature of the air admitted.

The vitiated air is to be removed by a flue from each cell, commencing near the ceiling. These are gathered into one large flue, passing under the roof over each arm of the building, the size of which is gradually increased in proportion to the number of flues opening into it, and the air is discharged into the central shaft, where there is a small furnace to accelerate the circulation in summer, or at other times, when it may be found sluggish.

The works appear to be progressing very satisfactorily. The walls throughout are now 12 or 13 feet above the ground.

THE NEW FOUNTAIN AT BRIGHTON NOT A FOUNTAIN OF HONOUR.

THE new Victoria Fountain on the Nevar, at Brighton, will not redeem our character as designers of this description of ornamental structure. It is tasteless and ugly, and will grievously disappoint all who have read the puffing notices of it, which have slipped into some of the provincial and London papers, like a pile of rock-work in the centre of a large reservoir, are three dolphins standing uncomfortably on their heads, and supporting with their tails (light being seen between them) a basin of the most ordinary design. This in its turn, and according to law, carries a second basin of the same pattern, on a disproportionately high pedestal; and the composition (if we may so mis-use the word) terminates with an equally lanky jet-piece of nondescript formation. The poor fish, wondering how they got into their extraordinary position, look quite ashamed of themselves—dash out of water, evidently—and the effect of the whole is gawky, straggling, and ungraceful. With so many beautiful examples of fountains from France, Italy, and Sicily before them, it seems quite extraordinary that such a perverted duplication as this should be perpetrated.

The material is cast-iron, bronzed; the cost, including the pipes and laying out the ground around the fountain, about 1,000*l.*

Brighton, generally, is extending greatly on all sides, and improving too. The greatest care appears to be bestowed on the maintenance of roads and approaches, and the external appearance of the town. The esplanade is certainly unrivalled, and will long serve to retain for Brighton the amount of public favour it now enjoys. The sea wall (if so it may be called, as the sea does not reach it), formed of beach concrete, stands well.

On Monday last two extensions of the railway were opened to the public;—one to Chichester, the other to Lewes. The most important work on the latter is the viaduct over the London-road, at the junction with the old line. It consists of 27 arches, the largest of which (crossing the turnpike road) spans 50 feet; the remaining 26 arches, 30 feet each. The first arches, springing from the main line, as we learnt, rest on an embankment of 45 feet and are 20 feet high; they gradually increase in height until they attain an elevation from the road to the parapet, of 70 feet. The arches are semicircular, and rest on piers 5 feet at springing, and 6 feet 6 inches at the bottom. This work was commenced May 12, 1845, and the last arch was keyed March 12, 1846. They are constructed on a very sharp curve, and produce a striking effect when seen from the neighbouring hills. The work is of brick, with a stone balustrade, not yet finished. There will be two stations at Lewes.

On the Chichester line the chief work is the bridge over the Arun. It is made of wood, on which the rails are laid, and extends in an unbroken line over the river, which is here about 60 feet broad. On the approach of a vessel, a portion of the bridge on the Brighton side is moved aside to the right by means of a winch, leaving an open space, and into this space the portion of the bridge over the river is then drawn, also by a winch, and the passage is left clear. The vessel passes; the bridge is again worked over; the side piece is moved into its place; and the rail is complete. Chichester, with its cathedral, will form an important ad-

* We cannot avoid alluding here, to Mr. Sheriff Langley's praiseworthy efforts to establish refuges for discharged prisoners. We trust he will not relax in his endeavours, although there are many difficulties in the way, they are not insurmountable.